MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

IN UNITY

DECEMBER 1981

GENERAL CONFERENCE 10

The Shamrock Hilton Hotel in Houston, Texas was humming with activity on August 3, 1981. It was the opening of the UFMCC General Conference Ten. It was also the first day of the nationwide strike by air traffic controllers.

Hundreds of people had arrived for the Conference, but their luggage wasn't necessarily there. It was a morning of anticipation. Old friends were catching up on the last two years. New friendships were already being formed.

Everyone in attendance knew that this was going to be an important conference. Long debated issues were going to be put to a final vote. Old policies and decisions were going to be tested. And somewhere during the busy week there might be time for fun and relaxation.

As the participants read their conference schedules for the first time, they saw an incredible array of workships, business sessions, worship services, panels, lectures, dances, concerts, and entertainment already scheduled. It was readily apparent that no one could go to every meeting or function. It was a time for choices.

FOUNDER ADDRESSES OPENING BUSINESS SESSION

A near capacity crowd attended the opening business session in the Grand Ballroom. Rev. Elder Troy Perry addressed the Conference, likening the event to a family reunion. Laughter punctuated his remarks as he reminisced about family reunions of his childhood with their gossip, scandal, and most of all loving concern for each other. He called upon the conference to remember that UFMCC is a family, a close and loving family, and that our disagreements do not mean that we have stopped loving each other. His remarks were well taken, and guided the Conference through the week to come.

It was time for the business at hand. From the first item of business, the Elders' Report, to the last item of business, the budget, reason prevailed. The business sessions were chaired by the Moderator, Rev. Elder Troy Perry, and Vice-Moderator, Rev. Elder Freda Smith. When the last item of business was concluded late on Saturday evening, there was a sense of accomplishment and an awareness that we had resolved important issues for the future.

Among the important actions taken were the adoption of the report of the

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Editorial

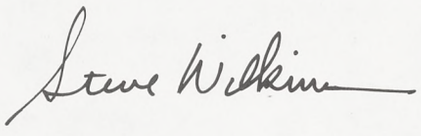
This issuue marks a number of changes for In Unity. We have a new format, a new Editor, and a new approach.

Allow me to introduce myself as the Interim Editor. I am a newly licensed clergyperson in UFMCC. I was formerly licensed in a pentecostal denomination, and was very active in publications work with that group. I have been a member of MCC for four years. I truly believe that MCC is God's messenger to the world in our day. I believe that In Unity is a great means we have of communicating our message to the world.

With this issue we are beginning a news format. Our primary emphasis will be to inform you, our readers, of what is happening in our Fellowship world-wide. In Unity will not be a forum for any particular viewpoint. We will present both sides of controversial topics. However, the areas where we agree are of great importance. This magazine will tell the world what we are doing to achieve our common goals.

We expect the readership of this magazine to greatly increase. We will need your help. You can help us by letting us know what you are doing in your local congregations, and what is happening in your community that will be of interest to the whole family of UFMCC. You can help by sending photos of events in your church and community. You can encourage someone else to read the issues and articles you find encouraging.

We are going to a monthly magazine, and as a result, each issue will be somewhat smaller than the bi-monthly issues have been. We invite your comments, and your prayers. Together we can make this an important publication for our churches and our community.
Happy Holidays!



Steve Wilkins, Interim Editor

HELP NEEDED

The Eastern Canadian District needs clergy badly. MCC Ottawa, is providing funds so a person can serve as pastor full time. Getting into Canada is no problem for a clergyperson with a valid UFMCC license. Please contact the District Coordinator, Rev. Brent Hawkes, in Toronto. This young district needs your help. They have four church bodies, two new feasability studies, and only one pastor. Please help!

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The appearance of a name in this magazine does not denote affectional or sexual preference.

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HOUSTON HOSTS GENERAL CONFERENCE TEN

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Task Force on Inclusive Language, and the first election of an Elder from the Laity. *(See the articles elsewhere in this issue.)*

INNOVATIVE WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

There were eighteen different worship services help throughout the Conference. These ranged from the 7:30 AM Communion Services, to the closing worship service on Sunday morning.

The forms of worship went from the tried and true to the new and exciting. In addition to singspiration, choir anthems, and other special music, there was liturgical dancing, Scripture readings in several languages, audio-visual presentations, and other new approaches to worship.

The Sunday morning service found the Grand Ballroom filled to capacity, and overflow seating filled in the lobby. There is no way to accurately count the thousands who attended that service. There was a memorable performance by the Conference choir, accompanied by a symphonic ensemble from the Dallas MCC. The newly elected Elders were installed. Rev. Elder Perry preached before television cameras taping the service for broadcast on a nation-wide television special. The sermon was a rousing challenge to the religious community of the world to hear the truth of God's love for all people.

Those who attended the various worship services carried away their own particular memories of good music and inspiring sermons–Rev. Freda Smith preaching on the prodigal child, Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart preaching on the Parenthood of God, the World Church Extension service reminding us of the world that is waiting to hear the good news of God's love, and many other moments when we were brought closer to our Creator.

INFORMATIVE WORKSHOPS

Workshops were held throughout the week on almost every subject imaginable. There were workshops on substance abuse, family conflicts, pastoral concerns, hymnody, church libraries, aging, political action, gay literature, and other workshops on topics of current interest and concern.

The workshops were well attended, and the participants were given new insights and information to help them minister to the needs of others in their local congregations.

TINNEY AND CLARK ADDRESS CONFERENCE

Dr. James Tinney, professor at Howard University, addressed the conference. Dr. Tinney is a lay theologian in the Church of God in Christ, editor the Spirit magazine, and founder and director of the Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights. Dr. Tinney has become an outspoken advocate for Human Rights in the pentecostal church. He challenged UFMCC to press forward in its task of formulating a theology of sexuality, and in its concerns for Third World peoples.

The Conference was also challenged by an address by Ms. Joan Clark, coordinator of the Ecumenical Women's Center in Chicago. Ms. Clark held an executive staff position on the United Methodist Church's Board of Global Ministries, Women's Division. After several years of active involvement in Women's concerns in that position, she was dismissed after publicly acknowledging her lesbian identity.

HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD RALLY

On Saturday afternoon, the Human Rights Award was presented during a rally. The Award was given to Dr. Loretta Williams, Chair of the Department of Social Responsibility for the Unitarian Universalist Association. The rally was a reaffirmation of UFMCC's commitment to the rights of all people everywhere.

Another inspiring session was the panel discussion on the subject "The New Religious Right: How Can We Respond?" Panelists included Ms. Joan Clark, Dr. James Tinney, Rabbi Allen Bennett of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco, and Rev. Angela Needham, pastor of the MCC congregation in Northampton, England. The panel was moderated by Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson.

YEAR OF THE DISABLED COMMEMORATED

1981 is the United Nation's International Year of the Disabled. On Wednesday evening, following the worship service, a very special presentation was given. It included the viewing of a film about a member of the MCC Toronto congregation, John Kellerman. The film has been televised in Canada. John attended the Conference, and those who met him will never forget the impact of his testimony.

CONFERENCE GAINS MEDIA ATTENTION

The city of Houston, and indeed the nation and the world, was aware of the Conference. Coverage was given by newspaper, radio, and television. One notable instance was an interview of Rev. Elder Perry and Rev. Larsen, pastor of MCC of the Resurrection in Houston, on a local television station. The interview included time for viewers to call in and ask questions. The local press generally treated the Conference in a professional, unbiased manner.

SOCIAL EVENTS HELD

There were a variety of social gatherings held during the Conference. These included poolside socializing after the evening services, a dance devoted to learning Western style dances, a concert by the Montrose Singers and Band from the Houston gay community, and a performance by the well-known comic, Robin Tyler. These events were well attended, and provided times for relaxation during a hectic week of business.

ON TO TORONTO

As the Conference drew to a close, those in attendance were already looking forward to the next General Conference to be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1983. Those who attended Conference in Houston left with an awareness that important work had been done and we had been brought closer together as a family. Whatever each individual's experience of Conference may have been, we were all reminded that God's work is continuing in UFMCC, and the challenges of the days ahead can be met as we work together.

UFMCC And El Salvador

Betty Richardson Nute, representing the American Friends Service Committee made a fact finding trip to El Salvador. She described the "land reform" that has come to the Salvadoran peasants in an article in the June 11, 1980 LOS ANGELES TIMES. On March 3 she wrote, the National Guard and the rightest terrorist group, Orden, "invaded a community Bible study group in Canton Carmen Montes, Chalantenango department, and massacred 12 people. In Canton Ojo de Agua, two men were decapitated and their hands and feet cut off, and two girls' arms were cut off and they were left to bleed to death. On February 21 near Camulasco, the army burned the fields to destroy cover, and wrecked two bridges to prevent escape." Their crime? Membership in the Christian Peasant League.

In February 1980, when the Carter administration announced an additional military aid package to El Salvador, which included millions of dollars and several teams of U.S. Military "Advisors", Archbishop Oscar Romero wrote a letter to President Carter telling him not to send any military aid to the Junta and warning him not to intervene "directly or indirectly with military, economic, or diplomatic pressures to determine the destiny of the Salvadoran people." He stated that U.S. aid would "sharpen injustice and repression against the organized people who are struggling in defense of their most fundamental human rights." On March 23, during his Sunday Mass, Romero called on rank and file soldiers in the Army to refuse to carry out the orders of their superiors if they were aimed at suppressing the people. On March 24, Archbishop Romero was assassinated by four gunmen as he was clebrating the Mass. The government, the rightest murder squads, and their supporters in the White House and the CIA could not tolerate this principled and Scriptural stand, especially from someone of Romero's prestige and popularity.

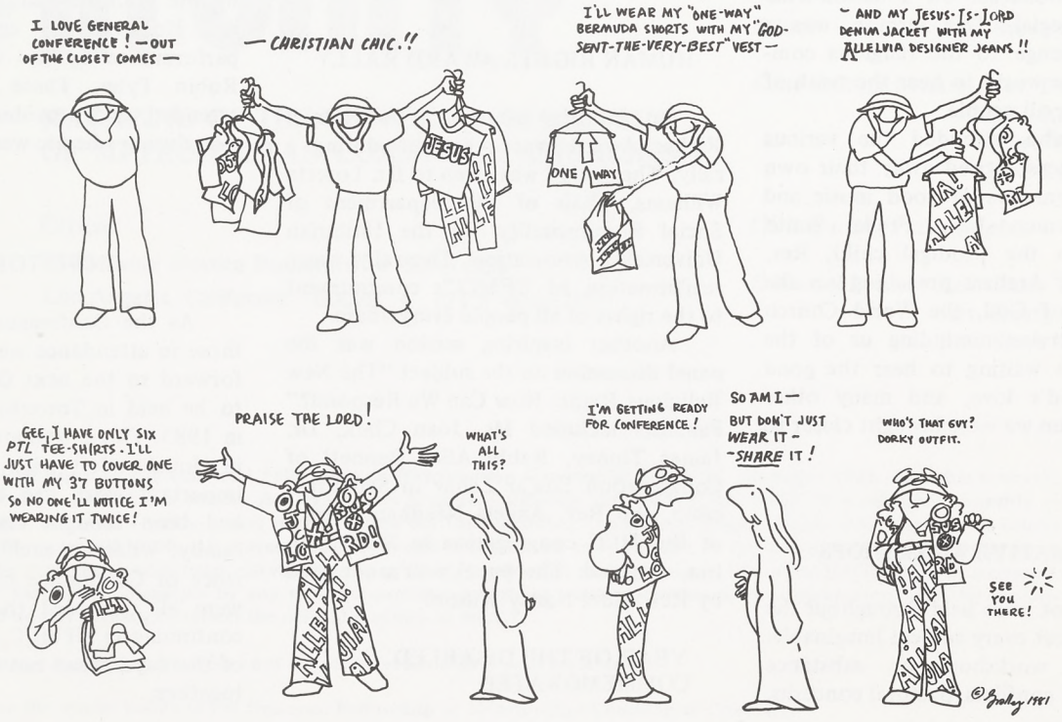
Rev. Ann Montague, a staff clergyperson with MCC Beach Cities, Santa Monica, California, who is an outspoken advocate of withdrawing U.S. military advisors and aid from El Salvador said, "The murders continue. The Church suffers. We all Suffer. Those of us who are citizens of the United States must accept our responsibility. We of the UFMCC must join our voices with the churches around the world who are calling for an end to all U.S. aid to the junta of El Salvador. We must join with the Body of Christ in vigils, marches leafletting, worship and prayer. But even more than that it is imperative that we support the struggle of the people of El Salvador by supporting their organization, the FDR, with prayers for their political and military victory.

We in the Southwest District passed the following resolution:

"Recognizing that the right of lesbians and gay men to determine the lifestyle of their choice without the fear of repercussions is the same as the right of a people to determine the social system of their choice, the UFMCC adds its name to the growing list of churches and human rights organizations in denouncing U.S. intervention in the people's struggle in El Salvadore."

LAY-UPS

by Jean Gralley


I LOVE GENERAL CONFERENCE! — OUT OF THE CLOSET COMES —
— CHRISTIAN CHIC.!!
I'LL WEAR MY "ONE-WAY" BERMUDA SHORTS WITH MY "GOD-SENT-THE-VERY-BEST" VEST —
— AND MY JESUS-IS-LORD DENIM JACKET WITH MY ALLELUIA DESIGNER JEANS!!
GEE, I HAVE ONLY SIX PTL TEE-SHIRTS. I'LL JUST HAVE TO COVER ONE WITH MY 37 BUTTONS SO NO ONE'LL NOTICE I'M WEARING IT TWICE!
PRAISE THE LORD!
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
I'M GETTING READY FOR CONFERENCE!
SO AM I — BUT DON'T JUST WEAR IT — — SHARE IT!
WHO'S THAT GUY? DORKY OUTFIT.
SEE YOU THERE!
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AN UPDATE ON *THE NEW RIGHT*

Rev. Dusty Pruitt
Contributing Editor

> *In our judgment of Homosexuality--a symptom of degeneracy which could destroy our race--we must return to the guiding Nordic principles of "extermination of degenerates."*
>
> *I know what you and I feel about these queers, these fairies. We wish we could get in our cars and run them down while they march. We need an emotion-charged issue to stir people up and get them mad enough to get up from watching TV and do something. I believe that the homosexual issue is the issue we should use.*

Do these quotes sound familiar? The first was credited to Heinrich Himmler in 1936--the second to Rev. Robert Billings, former Executive Director of the Moral Majority (in 1980). The New Right has been conducting an unprecedented attack on the privacy of countless Americans. And the goals of the New Right begin with the target of gay and lesbian Americans.

The goals of the New Right are *at least* fourfold:

--*Anti-sex.* Countless groups rail against "permissive sex," abortion (not just state-paid but *all* abortion), adultery (in their definition), homosexuality, lesbianism, sex education, and what they see as "an attack on the Christian family (defined as mother, father, junior and sis)."

--*Anti-ERA.* The new Right's definition of what women are to do is: stay home, submit to their husbands, cook, clean and bear children. Anything outside that narrow definition is considered "godless and immoral."

–*Pro-militarism.* The key to a safe America, according to the New Right is to escalate the arms race to deter the Warsaw Pact nations. Within the U.S.A., gun control is seen as dangerous to law-abiding citizens and therefore "immoral."

–*Anti-civil rights.* The gains and strides made in the area of civil rights by Blacks and other Third World minorities, as well as women and gays and lesbians, are regarded as a threat to the principles upon which our "fore*fathers*" founded the country.

In order to accomplish these goals, the New Right is committed to any tactic which will further these goals:

–*Massive direct-mail campaigns.* The goal of these campaigns is to raise money for whatever cause "hooks" you in the brochure. And the brochures are calculated to "hook" the reader by the use of inflamatory statements, scare words (such as: dirty, filthy, perverted, brainwashed, terrifying, etc.), underlining with red ink, and half-truths. The "opinion polls" of these direct-mail solicitations include questions worded so that no one could possibly answer except in the way the organization wants the questions answered!

–*Lobbying.* The agenda for these lobbying efforts include lobbying (in Congress, the White House and state legislatures) for bills to define life as beginning at conception (making any abortion murder), restoring prayer to public schools, censorship (of books and magazines considered pornographic--by their definition), maintaining and re-imposing laws outlawing sex between consenting adults in private, and anti-gay bills of all scopes.

–*Boycotts.* Boycotting TV and movies with sexual themes--and the latest tactic is to boycott the sponsors of these shows on TV. A recent mailing of "Boycott Sex & Violence on TV," a project of Christian Family Renewal in Clovis, CA, lists 10 TV shows targetted for a sponsor boycott. The ten are: *Dallas, Gangster Chronicles, Three's Company, Flamingo Road, Charlie's Angels, Saturday Night Live, Vegas. Benny Hill Show, Walking Tall,* and one write-in that the reader finds offensive.

–*School board lobbying.* The New Right is lobbying school boards and railing against Planned Parenthood groups to end sex education in the public schools. One organization rails against "sex dolls" which are used to teach about genitalia to kindergarden students. Another group launched a campaign in Maryland against gingerbread cookies it considered to be "sexually suggestive."

–*Electioneering.* The New Right groups are targeting state and national lawmakers who are not sympathetic to their causes for defeat in elections. In November of 1980, the New Right took a large part of the credit for the defeat of President Jimmy Carter as well as many key Senators and Representatives. In 1982, others are targetted for defeat--to be replaced by candidates running on the "New Right ticket."

The new right, with its money and inflammatory tactics, is indeed a formidable opponent. Although the New Right concentrates mostly on activities in the political arena, its marriage partner--the "Christian" half of the New Right-- is busy producing religious books targetted at MCC. One author targets MCC as a "cult" in his checklist of things to look for when working with the demon-possessed. Another named Troy Perry as the founder of the "Church of Sodom"-- later supposedly changed to "MCC." (The Board of Elders contacted the publishers of the latter and demanded a correction--which they received.)

The struggle for gay acceptance in both the political and religious arenas is far from over. And the result is still a toss-up. While the New Right is making gains, so are the various gay lobbying organizations. The antiquated immigration ban against gays is yielding to pressure from UFMCC, Gay Rights National Lobby, and others. The gains are small with few resources, compared to the New Right.

In the religious area, gains are also being made. One Christian magazine reported that the Catholic Church in America is moving toward a *de facto* acceptance of homosexuality. And in an opinion poll of evangelical leaders (in *Christian Life* magazine of January, 1981), 28 answered "yes", 4 answered "no", and 5 answered "maybe" to the question, "Should homosexuals be prohibited from teaching in public schools and holding positions in government involving national security?" In other words, 24% of these opinion leaders of evangelical Christendom are either pro-gay or are not decided.

But if this battle is a toss-up, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. The New Right is committed to destroying what MCC is called to do--to articulate a theology of sexuality. Our voice must be sober and reasonable against a strident, inflammatory, slanderous majority. We must continue our task in the might of God and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As Jerry Weller of GRNL puts it: "If you drop a frog into warm water, [it] will swim lazily around. Increase the temperature slightly and [it] will relax even more. When the water is hot, [it] will fall asleep. Raise the temperature even further, and eventually [it] will die in lazy comfort. DO YOU FEEL A LITTLE DROWSY?"

A New Ministry, A New Name, A New Posture

Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee

Washington, D.C. Pastor, Larry J. Uhrig, the Chair of the C.C.C.C. spent a week in Los Angeles at headquarters reviewing with staff, the file procedures used in more effectively serving the Clergy in the Universal Fellowship.

As Chair of this Committee, Reverend Uhrig consented to an interview with In Unity to bring up to date what is happening and also what happened at General Conference to make the work of C.C.C.C. operate more smoothly. Here it is:

Rev. Larry J. Uhrig

I.U.: Other than a name change, has anything else changed with the C.C.C.C.?

Uhrig: Speaking on behalf of the Credentials Committee I would like to express our sense of new directions in ministry as well as explain the important changes in our structure which are the product of a dynamic and powerful General Conference.

Initially, it is important to state that the *Manual on the Clergy,* the standards and procedures for the credentialing of clergy, represents a *Living Document,* one which breathes with the life of our ministry, changes with the growth of our ministry, and reflects the corporate wisdom and collecgial consent of the people of this international church meeting in General Conference.

It is our desire to reflect a posture of openness, care, and devotion to the ministry of Christ Jesus, in ways that empower people to do the work of Christ, equipped with the gifts of the Spirit and the tools of ministry.

I.U.: We have heard a lot about the burnout of clergy in the UFMCC. How is C.C.C.C. going to address, as well as help in that area?

Uhrig: Because the bottom line is to care for each other and to nurture the body, we strongly believe that the Credentials Committee must focus on bringing to life a structure of pastoral care which truly does the job of pastoral care and is free from the credentialing process. This is part of our agenda and we need everyone's wisdom and support to bring this into life. Some real good news–out of the workshop on pastoral care at General Conference there came a network of concerned lay and clergypersons. Persons to care for and respond to the real needs of the clergy of this church. This is a simple beginning and yet a real and visible step toward a more responsive and responsible caring for those persons who have devoted their life to the service of Christ in the professional ministry of UFMCC.

I.U.: What do the new changes look like?

Uhrig: Very simply, we have moved as a church to say that the ministry is the responsibility of every Christian person. We have affirmed that God's calling is addressed to everyone. The "priesthood of all believers," an ancient phrase of the church, is now a word which expresses our identity as members of the body of Christ. The new vocabulary of our by-laws tells the truth about our mission and calls every person of faith to respond to the calling of the Gospel. We now talk about "responding to the Word," "serving as Christ served", "being transformed", and "equipping the saints for ministry".

The revision of Article IV now paves the way for missions and study groups to call deacons and student clergy (formerly Exhorters). It also ties those offices into the District structure, thus strengthening and expanding the role of the District Coordinator in supervision and accountability.

The authority and involvement of the Credentials Committee to establish qualifications and procedures for credentialing is clearly affirmed by the actions of the General Conference, but in addition those qualifications and procedures must receive the approval of the General Conference. It is important to understand that the collegial consent of the people is the way the church has historically established the shape of both ministry and doctrine. Our new structure now reflects the reality that an empowered people, the Fellowship, clearly empowers persons, in this case the Credentials Committee, to act on behalf of all the people, that the ministry may be nurtured and grow in careful and responsive ways. Here again our words describe not only what shall be, but what is.

I.U.: Is it true that the General Conference approved a recommendation from the Credentials Committee to license Clergy for two years, instead of one as has been the case?

Uhrig: Yes, our licensed clergy now are credentialed for a period of two years rather than one. While this removes the necessity for a person to apply for relicense every year, it does not suggest

that the Credentials Committee, through its local extension the District Review Committee, does not wish to be in contact with each clergy on a regular basis. The DRC and the CC wish very much to be in contact on an annual basis that we may provide pastoral care and guidance as needed or requested. Again, we are saying that the structure is designed to communicate a posture which cares for the professional clergy of the Fellowship.

I.U.: At General Conference we heard a new phrase used, "the Judiciary." What is it?

Uhrig: Nothing more clearly represents our committment to be a part of caring than the decision of the General Conference as defined by the GSS report, to seperate the process for the hearing and disposition of charges against a clergyperson from the credentialing process. The new judicial structure allows for this to occur. While the Credentials Committee does establish the structure and procedures for the administration of the Judiciary the Credentials Committee has no further involvement in the process.

The 1981 changes brought about through the exceptional work done by the Government, Structures, and Systems Committee, and the action by the General Conference, to adopt the credentials, standards and procedures creates not only a new posture of ministry, but greater clarity in our structures which will render them more accessible to more persons.

I.U.: Every would-be Clergyperson I know freaks when you mention proficiency exams. What are the 1982 exams going to be like?

Uhrig: In a new procedure and an attempt to provide guidelines for persons preparing for the exams, the Credentials Committee will be making available questions for study in all four areas of testing. These study guide questions will be available in late November from the office of the chair of the Credentials Committee (The Rev. Larry J. Uhrig, 945 G St. N.W., Wash. D.C. 20001). The 1982 Biblical Exegesis texts will be taken from the book of Genesis and the Gospel of John. The objective questions which will comprise the actual tests will be taken from the areas covered by the specific study questions provided. With the exception of Biblical exegesis and sermon construction, all tests will be objective.

I.U.: Where are these changes leading us?

Uhrig: This is a new beginning, we have new names for many of our structures, there is a new posture which reflects a commitment to caring, all of this means that the Holy Spirit of God is busy shaping us and molding us that we might be prepared for the Great Things which we shall do in the name of Jesus Christ. An important part of all of this is that each of us continue to listen to one another, to pray for one another, and to trust it is God who is at work to lead us. It is clear to me that General Conference meant that God was calling us to be 'a people' not a collection of little groups or opinions, or position, but rather an empowered people.

I.U.: Who can our readers contact if they have any questions about C.C.C.C.?

Uhrig: All of the members of the Credentials Committee want to share with you in this journey of faith. If you have any questions please do not wait to address them to us;

Sub-Committee on Standards: The Rev. Valarie Bouchard - MCC Chicago
Sub-Committee on Concerns: The Rev. Jim Glyer - MCC Portland
Credentials Committee Chair: The Rev. Larry J. Uhrig - MCC Washington, DC

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE DECISION

Ten years of discussion and debate over inclusive language came to a close with the Tenth General Conference. The Elder's Task Force on Inclusive Language began a formidable job when it accepted the challenge of dealing with language in our Fellowship. As the Task Force said in its Preamble:

> *" The insidious nature of language which serves to emphasize one group as the norm or standard is that it reinforces that group's primacy and importance every time we think or speak . . ."*

The delegates and clergy of this conference took a giant step toward better communications when they accepted the amended report of the Task Force. There was some emotionalism, some anger, but a rational tone prevailed during the forum. When the report came to the floor of the conference, some amendments were made. The guideline for inclusive language refering to Jesus was amended to read:

> *"The historical person, Jesus, was male. the historical fact that Jesus was male affirms not that God chose to become incarnate with masculine characteristics, but that Jesus was fully human, as well as fully divine. And because Jesus incorporates the humanity of both men and women, it is appropriate to emphasize the full humanity rather than primarily the maleness of Jesus."*

The UFMCC statement of faith now reads in part:

> *"We believe:*
> *In one Triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God, our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit, God as our Sustainer."*

One minister, Rev. Lynn Guerra of Long Beach, California, remarked, "Changes are often difficult. We become very comfortable with the old ways. We are happy with the familiar. The fact that such a change is neither familiar nor comfortable for many of us does not mean that we need not expend the effort. Inclusive language is not a 'dirty word.' It is not a subversive attempt to destroy anyone's belief. Inclusive language reflects an attitude or stance of mutuality and openness towards others that recognizes everyone's right of equal access to the experiences and realization of wholeness. The Tenth General Conference expended the effort. Now it is up to each of us to also expend some effort to make God's will dominant in the lives of all people. We do live in a world of division and oppression. Let all of us in UFMCC unite and extend a hearty "well done" to the Task Force and support the efforts to teach the Gospel to all."

POLICEMAN QUITS OVER GAY ISSUE

HOUSTON – Since it is not uncommon for police officers to work extra jobs, HPD officer Bill Gray, 22, offered his services, without charge, to work security for some of his friends at MCCR during the recent convention held at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel. At the time he did not forsee it woud lead to the end of his career on the police force working out of central patrol.

There had been threats on Troy Perry's life and anti-gay demonstrations were feared. Gray had been working in the hotel lobby watching the crowd for erratic and unusual activities. Crowd control was his main concern.

But a vice officer was also on duty that night, unknown to Gray. He observed Gray in uniform, supposedly being affectionate with a male conventioneer.

Four days later, a friend tipped Gray off to the fact that he was under investigation for homosexuality.

On August 11, Gray asked his immediate supervisor if he was under investigation. "I'm not at liberty to disclose that," said the supervisor. When Gray took the matter to a higher echelon, he was told that it was true.

Rather than pursue the questioning, Gray told *TWT NEWS* that "I wished to resign because I felt it would save the city and myself a lot of hassle." The supervisor responded, "Fine. We'll make your resignation effective immediately."

Gray said no, as he didn't want to leave HPD on bad terms. He had preferred to give two weeks notice, rather than quit on the spot.

But Gray's last day on the job was that day, August 11. However, he was carried on the payroll for separation pay until September 11.

On September 9. Gray wrote a letter wishing to reverse his decision, but was told that Chief B.K. Johnson had already accepted his resignation and that it was too late.

Looking back over the chain of events ,"I regret having resigned, since it was an emotional decision reached under duress," Gray told *TWT NEWS.*

Asked if he had admitted his homosexuality on his application when he joined the force, Gray said, "I was not openly gay when I applied with HPD two and a half years ago."

Gray indicated that he would like to stay in law enforcement, citing several cities where gay police are accepted.

Both Houston and Dallas police chiefs maintain that is is unlawful to hire gays since homosexuality is still against the law in Texas, or until Section 21.06 of the Penal Code is repealed.

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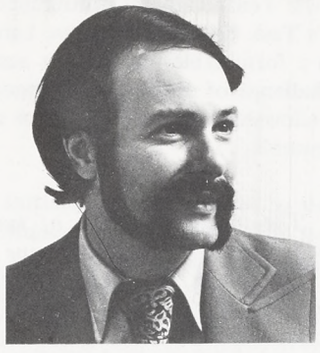

Dr. James S. Tinney

PENTECOSTAL RACIAL AND SEXUAL MINORITIES FORM NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The newest religious task force combatting "racism, sexism, and homophobia" has been formed within Pentecostalism, often considered to be among the most fundamentalist of American faiths.

The new organization, known as the Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights (PCHR), originated in response to the "almost total identification of our churches with such extremist groups as the Moral Majority, Christian Voice, and Religious Roundtable, in the public's eye, if not in fact," explained Dr. James S. Tinney, director of the coalition.

"We take as our task the education of Pentecostals and Charismatics regarding the fascist character of such alliances between right-wing politics and conservative religion," Tinney said, "as well as the task of consciousness-raising about the Pentecostal movement's own structural sins against racial and sexual minorities."

The coalition specifically encourages local churches to accept what it calls the "legitimate claims" of feminist, gay rights, and Black and Hispanic liberation movements.

A prepared statement of purpose commits the Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights to help members and clergy in the process of reconciling personal religious experience and biblical faith with activistic support for *avant garde* liberation theologies aimed at ending "racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism (or homophobia)."

A first priority of the coalition is "to locate those hundreds-of-thousands of Pentecostals who are struggling to assert and maintain their special identities within our churches."

Tinney laments the fact that the movement is viewed as a white male religion although "it was founded by a black minister, it has more black adherents than white, and it is predominantly made up of women."

"Since there are nearly 10 million Pentecostals in the U.S. alone, the very lowest estimate suggests that there may be as many as one million lesbian and gay Pentecostals, as well," he added. The arrival of a pro-gay Pentecostal support group follows a precedent set by the earlier formation of pro-gay caucuses in more than 25 other denominations, from Baptists to Seventh-Day Adventists.

The Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights opposes art depicting Christ as white, language using masculine references to God, and restrictions against ordaining women and practicing homosexuals.

Persons desiring more information are invited to write P.C.H.R., Box 386, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 20059.

--Press Release

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By Rev. Richard R. Mickley, M.A.

Rev. Mickley has taken a leave of absence to obtain a doctor's degree in Clinical Psychology.

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HISTORY MADE IN ELDERS ELECTION

The election of Elders at the 10th General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is now history. As always, it was a mixture of suspense, predictability, and surprise.

Anyone who watches the business proceedings of General Conference could predict that some Elders woud be re-elected; historically this has always happened. At the 10th General Conference the rule still applied. Reverends Troy Perry, Freda Smith and Jean White were re-elected to four-year terms.

Troy Perry, founder of the UFMCC has served on the Board of Elders since it's inception, and has held the office of Moderator for 12 years. He resides in Los Angeles, California.

Freda Smith is the Pastor of MCC-Sacramento, California, the first woman clergyperson and the first woman elected to the Board of Elders in the UFMCC. She has served as Vice-Moderator of that Board for the last two years.

Jean White is Pastor of MCC-London, England and the first non-U.S.A. clergyperson elected to the Board of Elders. She was elected to the Board two years ago to fill the unexpired term of Reverend Elder Carol Cureton who retired in mid-term. Reverend White has served as the Executive Secretary of World Church Extension for the past two years.

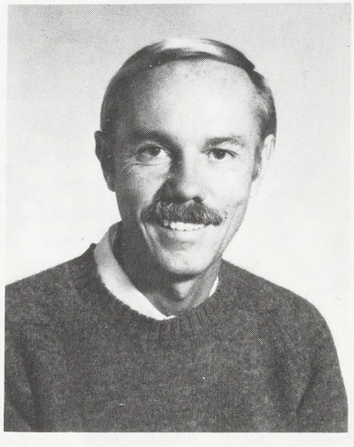
The General Conference retired Reverend Elder John H. Hose. Reverend Hose, affectionately called "Papa John" by most of the clergy and laity of the UFMCC, had served on the Board of Elders since it's inception. He had held the office of Treasurer and Vice-Moderator of the Board. In 1969 he and his lover of 14 years, Ray Street, attended their first service of M.C.C. Los Angeles when the founding Church of the Fellowship was only four months old. John and Ray immediately joined the small church and John was named Assistant Pastor of the group by the then-Pastor, Troy Perry.

When the Universal Fellowship was founded in 1970, Reverend Hose was the author of the original doctrinal statement of the denomination. The Board of Elders unanimously nominated John as its first Elder Emeritus and the General Conference, by acclamation, approved that action during the Sunday morning service.

The surprise of the Conference was the election of Mr. Michael Mank to the Board as the first non-clergy Elder. For several years, lay members of the UFMCC have been nominated for the post of Elder, but none ever succeeded in being elected.

Mr. Mank comes to the Board of Elders well qualified. He joined MCC San Francisco in 1970 as a Charter member (he had attended MCC-LA in 1969 while on vacation in that city) and became Church organist. Since then he has served on the Board of Directors, as clerk, of his home Church for eight years, served as the (U.S.) Northwest District Conference Treasurer for six years, as well as the Commission on the Laity of his District for the past five years. On the Fellowship level, Michael had served on the Faith, Fellowship & Order Commission for three years; since 1973 has served on the UFMCC By-laws Committee and since 1975 as its Chair. For the last two years he has served on the Fellowship Hymnody Committee. Michael is also an accomplished music composer, having written numerous hymns, including the official hymn of the Universal Fellowship, "I'm Not Afraid Anymore."

Michael H. Mank was born May 7, 1938 in Massachusetts. He has lived in California for 16 years and is a school teacher. He attended Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts where he received his BA in History and Chemistry, and his MA in Education. He has done graduate work at U.C.L.A. and U.C. Berkely.



Elder Michael H. Mank

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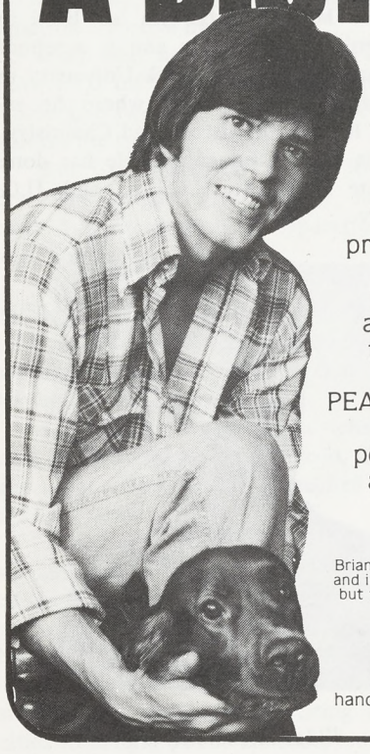
Brian McNaught is the most articulate spokesperson for Gay Rights in America today and he writes as well as he speaks. For openness, poignancy and genuineness, this is the book to read.

Sol Gordon, Ph.D., Professor of Child and Family Studies, Syracuse University

A DISTURBED PEACE

Brian McNaught



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*The spiritual aspect of our trip is to build a bridge of harmony and unity creating an atmosphere of peace within one and the community.

*Creating the environment for brotherhood and bringing together different cultures so that we may grow and understand.

THE BOYS - & GIRLS - FROM BOISE, PART TWO

By Steve Warren

One of the most beautiful sounds on earth is a closet door being slammed shut from the outside.

That sound was heard in Boise, Idaho, Saturday, May 23, for the first time in sufficient numbers to reverberate through that city. It was an electric evening, one that caused many of the "outside agitators" who were there to recall the days of our first public liberation experiences.

For me that was a decade ago in Atlanta, Georgia. That city's first Gay Liberation march was scheduled to pass the Methodist church I attended (pre-MCC), shortly after the Sunday morning worship service. I wasn't sure I'd have the nerve to join in, but wore a t-shirt and "hot pants" (Remember hot pants?) under my "Sunday go to meetin' " clothes, just in case.

There were about 50 of us in that parade, gay and proud and scared; but despite death threats and bomb scares I haven't been afraid since. There have been many other marches, most of them bigger; and there have been many wonderful feelings of pride and solidarity and strength and safety in numbers.

But until Boise I had been unable to recapture the feeling of that first march. Those of us who live in the relative security of big cities need to get out and visit "middle America" (a state of mind, not a place) to see the work that remains to be done and the people who need our help.

Jerry Falwell came to Boise on May 21, the 41st stop in his tour of state capitals. On the steps of the Idaho State Capitol he held an "I Love America" rally. An estimated 1,200 turned out to hear him define the goals of his "Moral Majority." The women in his choir wore red dresses, in flagrant defiance of the Levitical code. About 80 counter-demonstrators were there too, some claiming to represent the "Immoral Minority."

What Falwell didn't know was that Metropolitan Community Church at Boise was scheduled to host a conference of MCC's Northwest District that weekend. Without outside support, Boise's gay community might not have been ready to take a stand.

One of the first announcements at the conference was an invitation from Rev. B.J. McDaniels, pastor of MCC at Boise, for everyone to join in a candlelight rally on the same Capitol steps where Falwell had stood, at 11 p.m. Saturday, to tell Boise "We Love America, Too."

The rally went smoothly, with some 200 in attendance. The next day the newspaper estimated (generously, I suspect) that 50-75 were from Boise.

Speakers were brief and to the point. They were introduced by Rev. McDaniels, who said how proud she was of the people who had risked jobs, homes and family relationships to be there. One of those people was Mary E. who worked inside the very Statehouse where the rally was held. She told how frightened she was, but "I'm gay and proud and I love America!"

Rev. Ken Storer, who founded MCC at Boise in 1977, said he was born and raised in that area and had called his parents that night to warn them they'd probably be seeing him on television again. They told him how proud they were of him. To his own parents and those of the rally's participants he said, "Thank you for instilling in us the values and the strength to be here standing up for what we believe."

Lisa Crawford of Boise and Amani of Portland sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which is known as the "Black National Anthem."

Rev. James Sandmire, who pastors two MCCs in the San Francisco area, fired a direct blast at Falwell's brand of "Christianity," saying that hatred and bigotry have no place in the church he (Sandmire) serves and no relation to the Christ he serves.

Rev. Elder Freda Smith, pastor of MCC-Sacramento, recalled growing up "in darkness" in Pocatello, Idaho, some 300 miles from the rally site. "I took Idaho history," she told the crowd, "and learned that Idaho is an Indian word meaning 'Look! The sun is coming up over the mountain.' " She compared that to Lambda, the symbol of Gay Liberation which in physics means "pure energy producing pure light." This night represented the dawn of a new day, she told the energetic candle bearers who joined her in chanting "Idaho!" as she ended her speech.

In closing, Rev. McDaniels scored one last point against Falwell, whom she quoted as saying that the term "gay church" was as incompatible as "Christian thief." "In my Scriptures," she said, "the only person Jesus personally assured of Heaven *was* a thief. I'll take my chances with that thief."

The movie rights were recently sold to "The Boys from Boise," a book about the homosexual "witch hunts" of a quarter century ago. The jubilant crowd that gathered after the rally at Shuckey's, Boise's only gay bar (when were you last in a city with only one gay bar?), knew they had just laid the groundwork for a sequel.

There may be hard times ahead, but "The Boys - and Girls - from Boise, Part Two" will have a happy ending.

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